

## Message Text

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43

ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /011 R

66607

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: JOHNSON

APPROVED BY: S/S-O: PJOHNSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL LOS ANGELES IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 018368

EXDIS TOSEC 56

FOL REPEAT OF MEXICO 0776 TO SECSTATE JAN 25

QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 0776

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MX, CU, OAS

SUBJECT: MORE ECHEVERRIA ON CUBA

REF: MEXICO 740

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM JOVA

1. AT THE PRESIDENT'S BEHEST I CALLED ON HIM AT 9 P.M.  
RABASA WAS ALSO PRESENT. THE PRESIDENT AT ONCE  
LAUNCHED INTO THE CUBA SITUATION, DESCRIBED THE  
RESULTS OF MRS. ECHEVERRIA'S VISIT THERE, THE  
CORDIALITY WITH WHICH SHE WAS RECEIVED, THE LOW-KEY  
AND SENSIBLY APPROACH SHOWN BY CASTRO AND HIS  
ASSOCIATES TO VARIOUS PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE U.S.,  
THE REPEATED INDICATIONS BY THE CUBANS THAT THEY  
WISHED TO PROCEED TOWARD NORMALIZATION  
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OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., PARTICULARLY IN THE

MATTER OF TRADE. ECHEVERRIA STRESSED (AS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS) THAT WE WERE AT A MOMENT OF DECISION, THAT FAILURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRESENT ATMOSPHERE MIGHT SEE A CHANGE IN THE CUBAN SITUATION AND ATTITUDE AND POSSIBLE MOVE TOWARDS SOVIET UNION. HE URGED THAT YOU PERSONALLY GIVE MATTER YOUR CLOSE AND MOST SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION.

2. IN VIEW OF APPARENT DOOM OF BUENOS AIRES CONFERENCE, ECHEVERRIA REVIVED HIS PROPOSAL THAT HE SEND RABASA TO VISIT THOSE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THAT DID NOT HAVE RELATIONS WITH CUBA TO URGE THAT THEY DO SO AND SOUGHT U.S. BLESSINGS FOR SUCH A MISSION, POINTING OUT THAT IF SEVERAL MORE LATIN COUNTRIES RE-ESTABLISHED RELATIONS (PARTICULARLY TRADE RELATIONS) WITH CUBA IT WOULD THEN BE EASIER FOR THE U.S. TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE WHEN IT DEEMED THE MOMENT APPROPRIATE.

3. I TOLD HIM THAT THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY UNPALATABLE TO US AND REMINDED HIM OF YOUR PREVIOUS MESSAGE THAT WE COULD NOT EXPLICITLY OR TACITLY APPROVE SUCH A COURSE. I POINTED OUT THAT THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS IN APRIL, THUS ONLY A FEW WEEKS LATER THAN THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING WOULD HAVE BEEN, AND URGED THAT THE MATTER BE HANDLED EITHER THEN OR IN SOME PRIVATE MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO OASAGA OR PERIPHERALLY TO IT, IF THAT WERE DEEMED MORE APPROPRIATE. RABASA SUPPORTED ME STRONGLY IN THIS AND ALTHOUGH ECHEVERRIA CONTINUED TO ARGUE THAT THIS WAS ALMOST TOO LATE, BY THE TIME THE CONVERSATION CLOSED HE SEEMED RECONCILED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF DEALING WITH CUBAN MATTER AT OR AROUND THE OASGA. HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THIS MEETING NOT FAIL TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER DEFINITELY AND HOPED THAT YOU WOULD GIVE IT YOUR CAREFUL ATTENTION AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH REGARDING STEPS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL DISPOSITION OF THE MATTER. FOR HIS PART HE WOULD WORK TOGETHER WITH PRESIDENT

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PEREZ OF VENEZUELA WHO IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT MEXICO IN MARCH AND MIGHT STILL SEND RABASA TO WHIP UP SUPPORT IN LATIN AMERICA.

4. ECHEVERRIA SAID HE WOULD FEEL MORE SECURE IF THE UNITED STATES WOULD JOIN WITH MEXICO IN VOTING IN FAVOR OF LIFTING SANCTIONS OR OF GIVING FREEDOM OF ACTION. IN REPLY TO HIS DIRECT QUESTION, I TOLD HIM

I COULD NOT ANSWER AS TO OUR VOTE BUT DID SAY THAT WE WOULD AGREE TO MODIFY THE RIO TREATY VOTING REQUIREMENTS ON LIFTING SANCTIONS TO A SIMPLE MAJORITY. RABASA POINTED OUT THAT IN SUCH A CASE EVEN THE TWELVE VOTES OBTAINED IN QUITO WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO LIFT SANCTIONS. (WE DID NOT ENTER INTO A DISCUSSION OF WHETHER MODIFICATION OF RIO TREATY WOULD REQUIRE RATIFICATION BY GOVERNMENTS BEFORE ENTERING INTO FORCE.)

5. ECHEVERRIA CLOSED CONVERSATION BY SENDING YOU WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS AND ASSURANCES THAT HE WISHED TO KEEP OPEN THE DIALOGUE BOTH WITH YOU PERSONALLY AND THROUGH THE TLATELOLCO-TYPE DISCUSSIONS. HE RECOGNIZED THAT WITH DISPUTE OVER TRA, LATTER HAD RECEIVED A SETBACK BUT HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE TEMPORARY AND HOPED THAT SOME FIRM ASSURANCES BY YOU AS TO YOUR INTENTIONS TO SEEK MODIFICATION OR TRA WOULD HELP ATMOSPHERE GREATLY. (IN ACCORDANCE WITH LATEST INSTRUCTIONS, I DID NOT PURSUE THIS POSSIBILITY.) ECHEVERRIA HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT YOU AND HE COULD SOON HAVE PERSONAL DISCUSSIONS AND URGED THAT YOU FEEL FREE TO VISIT ACAPULCO SOON AND YOU COULD COMBINE SUCH A VISIT WITH INFORMAL TALKS.

6. ON CLOSING THE CONVERSATION I STRESSED THAT IT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS UNFRIENDLY IF HE WERE TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE OTHER LATIN COUNTRIES TO MOVE UNILATERALLY ON CUBA, THUS LEAVING US ISOLATED ON THIS AS WELL AS ON TRA AND WE BOTH CONCLUDED BY HOPING THAT THE U.S. AND MEXICO, AS ON SOME PAST OCCASIONS MIGHT  
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WORK TOGETHER ON SOME FORMULA ON CUBA THAT WOULD BE MORE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE, EITHER IN CONNECTION WITH THE OASGA OR, AS ECHEVERRIA HOPES, BEFORE THAT.  
JOVA  
UNQTE INGERSOLL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TRADE, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS, TOSEC 56  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 JAN 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** greeneet  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STATE018368  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** O: JOHNSON  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750029-0093  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 75 MEXICO 740  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 SEP 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <18 DEC 2003 by greeneet>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MORE ECHEVERRIA ON CUBA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MX, CU, OAS, BUENOS AIRES  
**To:** LOS ANGELES  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006